

Calendar No. 958

110TH CONGRESS } 2d Session }	SENATE	{ REPORT 110-459
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PUBLIC DIPLOMACY RESOURCE CENTERS ACT OF 2007

SEPTEMBER 12, 2008.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BIDEN, from the Committee on Foreign Relations,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 2553]

The Committee on Foreign Relations, having had under consideration the bill H.R. 2553, to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to provide for the establishment and maintenance of existing libraries and resource centers at United States diplomatic and consular missions to provide information about American culture, society, and history, and for other purposes, reports favorably thereon with amendments and recommends that the bill do pass.

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this legislation is to promote increased support for a public diplomacy tool, namely libraries and resource centers abroad that are maintained and operated by the Department of State.

II. COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 2553 was introduced on May 24, 2007. The House of Representatives approved the bill on October 9, 2007 by a voice vote. On June 24, 2008, the Committee on Foreign Relations ordered the bill favorably reported by voice vote, after approving several amendments to the bill.

III. DISCUSSION

U.S. public diplomacy is carried out by a range of programs. One important program involves libraries and resource centers, which

are a means to allow foreign nationals access to information that permit them to better understand American culture and values. The 2003 report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World, chaired by retired diplomat Edward Djerejian, noted that these facilities can “bring a personal presence to American diplomacy that has waned in recent years” as well as “provide an outpost for public diplomacy in areas that have not been previously targeted or are underrepresented,” at a relatively minimal cost.

Because security concerns and budget cuts following the end of the Cold War have decreased access to American facilities overseas at a time when the global image of the United States is suffering, several reports that have reviewed public diplomacy programs have echoed or expanded upon the findings of the Djerejian panel in urging additional support for libraries. Accordingly, the purpose of H.R. 2553 is to make clear in statute that one of the duties of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy is to provide for the establishment of new and maintenance of existing libraries and resource centers at or in connection with U.S. diplomatic mission. The bill further instructs the Secretary of State to ensure that such facilities are open to the general public the greatest extent practicable, consistent with security requirements.

IV. COST ESTIMATE

In accordance with Rule XXVI, paragraph 11(a) of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee provides this estimate of the costs of this legislation prepared by the Congressional Budget Office.

UNITED STATES CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, July 2, 2008.

Hon. JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 2553, the Public Diplomacy Resources Centers Act of 2008.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Sunita D'Monte.

Sincerely,

PETER R. ORSZAG.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

*July 2, 2008.***H.R. 2553****Public Diplomacy Resources Centers Act of 2008**AS ORDERED REPORTED BY THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN
RELATIONS ON JUNE 24, 2008

H.R. 2553 would authorize the Department of State to establish and maintain libraries and resource centers at or connected with U.S. diplomatic missions. It would require the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy to report to the Congress on the functions and effectiveness of the libraries and resource centers. The department also would be required to show American films to promote American culture, society, history, and values. The act would authorize the appropriation of such sums as may be necessary for those purposes.

The department has authority under current law to open and maintain libraries and resource centers overseas. The United States currently operates 378 American Corners and 182 Information Resource Centers worldwide. Both provide information about the United States to overseas audiences, but American Corners are generally established outside diplomatic missions and in partnership with host country institutions. Based on information from the department, CBO estimates that the costs of screening American films and the new reporting requirement would total less than \$500,000 a year, assuming the availability of appropriated funds. Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues.

H.R. 2553 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

On January 9, 2008, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 2553 as passed by the House of Representatives on October 9, 2007. The two versions of the legislation are similar, but H.R. 2553 as passed by the House of Representatives would allow libraries and resource centers to accept and spend donations. CBO estimated the authority to accept and spend donations would have no significant effect on direct spending or revenues.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Sunita D'Monte. This estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

V. EVALUATION OF REGULATORY IMPACT

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 11(b) of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee has determined that there is no regulatory impact as a result of this legislation.

VI. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with rule XXVI, paragraph 12 of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted

is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman).

State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956

ORGANIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SECTION 1. (a) SECRETARY OF STATE.—

* * * * *

(b) UNDER SECRETARIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—* * *

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(3) UNDER SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY.— There shall be in the Department of State, among the Under Secretaries authorized by paragraph (1), an Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, who shall have primary responsibility to assist the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary in the formation and implementation of United States public diplomacy policies and activities, including international educational and cultural exchange programs, information, and international broadcasting. The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy shall—

(A) prepare an annual strategic plan for public diplomacy in collaboration with overseas posts and in consultation with the regional and functional bureaus of the Department;

(B) ensure the design and implementation of appropriate program evaluation methodologies;

(C) provide guidance to Department personnel in the United States and overseas who conduct or implement public diplomacy policies, programs, and activities;

(D) assist the United States Agency for International Development and the Broadcasting Board of Governors to present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively; **[and]**

(E) submit statements of United States policy and editorial material to the Broadcasting Board of Governors for broadcast consideration**[.]** ; and

(F) *provide for the establishment of new and the maintenance of existing libraries and resource centers at or in connection with United States diplomatic and consular missions.*